

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 9671

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EXDIS

EYES ONLY HABIB FROM SULLIVAN

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, RP

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE BASE NEGOTIATIONS

REFS: (A) STATE 163986, (B) STATE 163985

1. AS YOU ARE AWARE, FILIPINOS HAVE SUBMITTED EXTORTIONATE DRAFT OF MILITARY BASE AGREEMENT AND CONTINUE TO DRAG THEIR HEELS IN TELLING US WHAT THEY EXPECT IN WAY OF QUID PRO QUO. I SUSPECT THIS SITUATION HAS HAD AVERSE EFFECT UPON WASHINGTON WORKING GROUP BACKING UP OUR NEGOTIATIONS. WE THINK WE SEE A SYNDROME DEVELOPING WHICH REFLECTS FACT THAT WE HAVE A PERFECTLY VALID AGREEMENT EFFECTIVE UNTIL 1991 AND THE HELL WITH IT.

2. MUCH AS I CAN APPRECIATE THE FRUSTRATION THAT PRODUCES THIS VIEW, IT IS VERY SHORT-SIGHTED INDEED. THE CAPACITY OF THE FILIPINOS (AND THEIR TALENT) TO HARRASS OUR BASES IS INFINITE. THE GENERAL DETERIORATION WHICH WOULD FLOW FROM A COLLAPSE OF THESE TALKS WOULD BE EXTENSIVELY CORROSIVE TO ANY BROADER POSITION IN ASIA.

3. THEREFORE, DESPITE THE ENORMOUS WORKLOAD YOU CURRENTLY HAVE AND YOUR PREOCCUPATION WITH CRISES, I WOULD
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LIKE TO ASK YOU TO TAKE A PERSONAL HAND IN RESPONDING TO

OUR PROBLEMS OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS. WHAT WE WILL NEED IS FAST WASHINGTON REACTION AS WELL AS AN ABILITY TO SEE SOME OF THE LARGER ISSUES INVOLVED. WHILE WE EXPECT DETAILED GUIDANCE ON SUBSTANCE, WE ASSUME WASHINGTON CONSIDERS US CAPABLE OF MAKING OUR OWN DECISIONS ON TACTICS.

4. AS A MATTER OF TACTICS, I AM ATTEMPTING TO MAKE A NUMBER OF RATHER MEANINGLESS "CONCESSIONS" IN THE US DRAFT TO DEMONSTRATE FLEXIBILITY AND TO TEASE FILIPINOS INTO MAKING MAJOR CONCESSIONS IN THEIR DRAFT. WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED DELAYS UP TO 8 DAYS IN GETTING ANY WASHINGTON RESPONSES TO OUR MOST TRIVIAL PROPOSALS. FOR EXAMPEL, ON TAXATION, WE WISHED TO TABLE A PARAGRAPH RECORDING A PRACTICE WHICH WE ALREADY FOLLOW. WASHINGTON AGREED IN PRINCIPLE WITH EH PARAGRAPH BUT REFUSED TO LET US TABLE IT (REF A). ON CLAIMS, WE SUBMITTED A DRAFT TO WASHINGTON WHICH FOLLOWS PRECISELY THE CURRENT PRACTICE AND WHICH PARALLELS THE DRAFT WE TABLED IN WASHINGTON. THIS HAS BEEN REBUFFED (REF B) AND WASHINGTON HAS ASKED US TO GET A JURISDICTION EXEMPTION WHICH WE HAVE NEVER ENJOYED IN THE PAST. IN DEFINING OUR FACILITIES, WE HAVE TAKEN A TEXT BORROWED DIRECTLY FROM A JCS PUBLICATION, AND HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO "COORDINATE" THIS DEFINITION. NO DATE FOR A REPLY CAN BE PROMISED.

5. ALL THIS IS DISTRESSINGLY REMINISCENT OF WHAT CHARLIE WHITEHOUSE HAS TOLD ME OF HIS PROBLEMS IN ATTEMPTING TO GET ANSWERS FROM WASHINGTON ON THE THAI NEGOTIATIONS. RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, HE BLAMES MUCH OF THE THAI FIASCO ON THIS BUREAUCRATIC CONSTIPATION. PERHAPS WE WANTED TO BE GENTLY PUSHED OUT OF THAILAND BY THE THAIS AND THE CONFUSION WAS DELIBERATE. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT WE WANT TO STAY IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THEREFORE THE CONFUSION WOULD SEEM COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.

6. I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL IF YOU COULD CALL TOGETHER THE VARIOUS KEY PERSONNEL IN WASHINGTON TO STRESS (A) THAT HIGHEST AUTHORITY DOES WANT AN AGREEMENT AND HE WANTS IT SOON, PREFERABLY IN AUGUST, BECAUST OF LARGER CONSIDERATIONS IN DEALING WITH THE CONGRESS; (B) THAT THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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NEW AGREEMENT NECESSARILY IS GOING TO LESSEN, RATHER THAN ENHANCE, OUR STATUS BECAUSE WE ARE EXPLICITLY GOING TO ACCOMODATE PHIL SOVEREIGNTY. OUR PROBLEM IS TO LIMIT THE DAMAGE RATHER THAN SEEK NEW AND BETTER EXEMPTIONS THAN WE HAVE HAD BEFORE; AND (C) FIX A SUSPENSE TIME (PREFERABLY 24 HOURS, BUT NO MORE THAN 48 HOURS) FOR REPLIES TO OUR OPERATIONAL CABLES. WE CAN DEAL BETTER WITH TOUGH REPLIES THAN WE CAN WITH NO REPLIES AT ALL, BUT WE EXPECT THE

REPLIES TO BE REALISTIC.

7. I HAVE NO RPT NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE EXORBITANCE OF
PHIL DEMANDS AND ABOUT THE NEED TO REDUCE THEM. ON THE
OTHER HAND, I KNOW A LITTLE SOMETHING ABOUT PHIL CHARACTER
AND THEIR NEGOTIATING TACTICS. I DO NOT RPT NOT FEEL
WE SHOULD WRITE OFF THE PROSPECT OF GETTING MAJOR CONCESSIONS
FROM THEM IF WE KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM. I DO NOT RPT NOT
THINK IT SMART TO THROW UP OUR HANDS AND FALL BACK ON OUR
1991 PROSPECTS. HOWEVER, WE CAN NOT RPT NOT KEEP UP THE
MOMENTUM UNLESS WE GET RAPID ANSWERS TO OUR CABLES, IN A
GENERAL FRAMWEORK OF ACCEPTING SOME INCONVENIENCES
PERTAINING TO PHIL SOVEREIGNTY, WHILE MAINTAINING MAXIMUM
US OPERATING FLEXIBILITY.
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